The Littlest Vampire

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The Littlest Vampire

by LivingOnTheEdge5

Summary

Seven year old Willy Graham covets a vampire cape.

Written for Hannictober.
October 6th prompt: "Vampire"

Gifted to two very fine and generous writers.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Crunchcrunchcrunch.

Willy Graham, is marching through drifts of dry leaves.

Two days ago, a life-altering event occurred in the seven year olds world, precipitating this, his first solo visit into the village.

Crunchcrunchcrunch

"Hey there sugar!"

Willy looks over at the woman pegging-out her laundry and waves. "Hi!" He calls as her old bulldog waddles-up and snuffles a greeting; the boy stoops to pet it. "Hey there Mistah Magoo!" He chirps as he rubs it's soft coat. "Sorry I can't stay...I'm gonna to the store!"

Mr. Magoo pants a doggie smile and returns to his spot beside the laundry basket.

"Bye!" The boy calls to the woman.

"Bye, bye honey, tell your daddy I said 'hey.'"

"Yes ma'am." The child replies and continues on his way singing a little song.

"Twodimestwodimestwodimes...I got twodimestwodimestwodimes."

As he nears the village proper, homes become grander, and Willy slows down to check for any additions to their Halloween decor. He sees that the Jackson's have added cornstalks to their porch, while the Meyer's huge magnolia tree is circled all around by stuffed leaf bags fashioned to resemble Jack o' Lanterns.

Willy smiles and marches on, continuing the song in his head; the sidewalks being too populated now for an audible song.

Two dimes, two dimes. Daddy gav' me two dimes.

Finally... he's here; the boy stops dead in his tracks, clutching the precious coins in his hot, little fist.

He is standing outside the best, most important store in the whole village, and rituals must therefore be observed.

First, he reads the signs and adverts.

Let Floyd's help you enjoy a Halloween filled with treats...not tricks!

Ice Cold Cheerwine- It's Full of Good Cheer!

Purina Feed sold here!

Don't go all the way to town...get what you need at Floyd's!

Today's special: 1/2 pound of nails $.49 !!!

Willy smiles. *Dat sales new! I'm gonna tell daddy 'bout that! Dat's gonna make him real happy!*

Once every sign and advertisement is studied, Willy allows himself to pursue the sundries for sale: shiny new shovels, pails, electric irons, and hair dryers.

Finally, it's time.

Time to find the object of his obsession, the one which prompted this solitary mile-long march along country roads.

The item which he hopes to secure today on what he's heard folks call a 'lay-a-way' plan.

What if'n it's not still here? What if'n two dimes ain't enough!?

Willy closes his eyes, makes a wish and opens them again. He straightens his thin, little body and walks towards the corner of the display; the section where the Halloween costumes, masks, and pumpkin treat buckets are temptingly laid-out.

Der *it is It's still der!*

Willy's round blue eyes widen at the wonderful beauty of **The Thing**; cupidity floods his young soul.

Inside the shop, Mr. Floyd watches the child's antics with amusement. "And twenty-five makes two...thank ya kindly Miss Harper 'n come again."

He hands his customer her package and looks to see if the Graham boy is still outside; he is, nose pressed to the glass. Mr. Floyd sighs and bends down to get the ammonia bottle and a rag.

"Hey there buckaroo!"

Willy starts out of his reverie when Mr. Floyd, carrying a bottle and a rag, appears. "Watcha lookn' at?" The man asks kindly, damping his rag." Same thang as before?"

Willy blushes. "Yes sur...uh...uh...Mr. Floyd?"

"Mmmm? " The man asks absent mindedly, absorbed in wiping-off the boy's nose and fingerprints. "There! Much better!"

Willy regards the sparkling plate glass. "Sorry 'bout that sur...I was wonderin'...I means to say...I was thinkn'..."

Mr. Floyd laughs and jerks his head towards the door. "Come on in Willy...I've got some stock to tend to...you kin tell all 'bout it inside."

Willy happily follows Mr. Floyd into his store and sniffs the air like a baby bloodhound. "You'ns spilled some silage?" He asks with a hopeful air. "I kin sweep it up for you sur!"

Mr. Floyd chuckles. "Well... that's an idea!" He says thoughtfully as he walks behind the long counter, stopping when he reaches the jars of penny candy. " But first thangs first...how's your daddy? And what's your pleasure?"

Willy walks along the outside of the counter until he reaches the glowing array of brightly colored sweets. " He's real good sur, got good work now... he sends his regards."

"Well! That's fine! That's mighty fine! Glad to hear it!" The man smiles down at the boy.

Will's tummy warms at the kind words; he knows Mr. Floyd genuinely likes him and his father, never looks down on them like some of the town folk are wont to do.

"How 'bout a couple of your favorite wax doodads...cuz that's some news to celebrate!"

Willy Graham's wide smile lights up his sweet face when Mr. Floyd lifts two packages of wax lips from their box. Grinning, the boy holds his grubby palms together like he's about to receive the Body of Christ.

The man's homely face registers surprise as he drops the sweets into the child's hands. "Law! Willy Graham!? Whatcha gone and done to your two front teeth?! Youn's look like a real, live vampire!"

Willy giggles, wriggling in happiness. "Yus sur! I'll lost 'em two days ago...one right afta the otha! Daddy said he'd nevah seen such a thang...and gave me these!" He holds up the silver dimes.

Mr. Floyd whistles with admiration. "Whooeee! You'ns rich as Roosevelt! Whatcha gonna do with all that money?"

Willy's happy smile dims. Mr. Floyd has always been so kind and generous; the boy feels a stab of uncertainty. Maybe his plan will be construed as freeloading. "Ummm...I don't know, sur..."

Mr. Floyd's warm, dark eyes watch the boy's inner struggle; he has an idea what this is all about.

"You'ns still interested in that Dracula monster cape?"

Willy's face flushes pink. "Ummmm..."

"T'would be a real shame...a real fanger like yourself not to have the right cape...howz 'bout we go see how it looks?"

Mr. Floyd walks to the front window and pulls the cape from the display. Behind them the door chimes as a group of teenagers file inside.

"Be right with you folks!" Mr. Floyd calls and bends down to Willy's level. "Here, "he whispers, "try it on...see how it feels."

He leaves Willy shyly holding the cape to address the youngsters. " How kin I help you?"

Willy wishes he could have privacy when he tries on the cape for the first time; such a momentous event requires quiet contemplation.

" Linda! Look over there...how cuuuute!?"

"Awww! What a cute little boy! Are you going to be vampire for Halloween?"

Two teenage girls have noticed Willy and are smiling over at him. The child's ears flame red and he drops his head.

"Aww...he's embarrassed! Don't be shy sweetie! You'll look real nice!"

Happily for Willy, the girls' dates draw their attention away and soon they're off, in a swirl of perfume, tossing hair, and goodbyes.

"Real nice young'ns, " Mr. Floyd observes as he walks over to the boy, " on their way to some big football hullabaloo next county over...now...whatcha think?"

Will strokes the black, shiny nylon fabric cape, runs his fingers reverently across the red lining. "It's beautiful," he pronounces.

"Well then? Put let's put it on you...here, son...let me help you."

Mr. Floyd plucks the cape from the boy's hands and drapes it across his back. He pulls the ties together and makes a tight bow, then turns the boy towards the mirror. "There now... whatdaya think?"

Willy stares at his own reflection, he barely recognizes himself.

The cape, full length because of his small stature, makes him appear, older, regal...mysterious. "Wow," he lisps, "I **am** Dracula!"

"Looks that ways to me too," the man says sincerely. "Let's see those fangs!"

Willie raises his upper lip to showcase the gap left by his missing milk teeth. "My name is Count Dracula! I vant to drink your blood!" The child chants, flapping the cape like bat wings.

Mr. Floyd laughs, the normally introverted boy's attempt at menace is adorable. "Looks like you're all set."

Willie drops his arms and looks nervous. "Could...would...is two dimes enuff for a lay-a-way?"

Mr. Floyd pretends to ponder the question. He was planning on gifting the cape, but has a better idea, one which should avoid any nasty misunderstandings if the father doesn't condone charity.

" Two dimes? Tis plenty! But I was thinkin'...how old are you now?"

Willy stands up straight and squares his shoulders. "I'm seven!" He pipes.

"Seven! As much as all that!? Well...thars plenty chores 'round here a big fella like you could do! How's 'bout you come work for me... then I kin take it outta your wages."

I'll have a job! Jus' like daddy! And I kin help pay fur stuff!

"Deal!" The boy squeaks, holding -out his hand.

"Deal," the man says, shaking the mite's hand.

Sighing with relief and contentment; Willy turns to look at himself once more.

"Dis is gonna be the best Halloween ever!" He pronounces beaming at his own reflection. "I jus' know it!"

Thirty years later, in honor of that poor, country boy, Will Graham pours a handful of fun-sized candy bars into the diminutive vampire's trick or treat bag.

"Thank you! Happy Halloween!" The child gasps, and races back down the stairs. "Mom! He gave a whole handful!"

Will smiles and waves in the direction of the faint 'thank you' then closes the door.

"Will?" Hannibal is waiting for him in the den; fondue pot and "Frankenstein" DVD at the ready.

"Coming!" He calls, then pauses. He's spied an Almond Joy in the candy bowl and recollects now that it was the old mercantile owner's favorite.

He plucks the bar out of the pile, unwraps it, and raises it in a toast. "Thank you, Mr. Floyd," he whispers, "for always making me feel like I was worth it."

He pops the whole piece into his mouth and chews contemplatively; it's coconut center is much sweeter than he remembers it being from childhood.

"Will? Are you coming?"

"Be right there!" Will calls back. "Just turning-off the porch light." He flips the switch then stands, looking-out over the empty street.

Halloween is over.

"Happy Halloween Mr. Floyd," he says softly into the quiet night, and goes to join Hannibal.

End Notes

written rather quick and dirty, so please point out glaring mistakes :0)

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